

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. Claims 8-14 and 16-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1-7, 15 and 27-30 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 31-48 were previously canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

The claims are amended in order to more clearly define the invention, support for which is found in the figures and related parts of the specification. Claims 8, 11-14, 16, 19, 22 and 25 are rewritten in independent form and, therefore, these claims as amended are not narrowed.

The abstract is amended to more accurately summarize the claimed invention. The title is amended, to more concisely name the claimed invention.

Claim 7 was objected to as not further limiting claim 1. Claim 7 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer and, therefore, this objection is moot.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 15 and 27-30 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Bertacchini (i.e., U.S. Pat. No. 6,341,149). Claims 1-7, 15 and 27-30 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer and, therefore, this rejection is moot.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

At page 1, tick box 7 and page 5 of the Action, the Examiner indicates that claims 8-14 and 16-26 would be allowable if rewritten to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. This indication of allowable subject matter is very much appreciated.

Other than as explicitly set forth above, this reply does not include acquiescence to statements by the Examiner. In view of the above, all the claims are considered patentable and allowance of all the claims is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned (at direct line 512-457-7233) for prompt action in the event any issues remain.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.136(a) pertaining to patent application processing fees, Applicant requests an extension of time from January 23, 2004 to February 23, 2004 in which to respond to the Office Action dated October 23, 2003. A notification of extension of time is filed herewith.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0456 of Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich, LLP.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: January 26, 2004

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